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July 2, 2002

The Honorable Michael K. Powell
Chairman, Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I am writing with respect to recent announcements by WorldCom that it has discovered serious financial accounting inaccuracies and to subsequent media reports regarding the possible imminent bankruptcy of the company. Obviously, the collapse of the nation's second largest long distance carrier would be a significant and unprecedented event.

I am concerned that any decision by WorldCom management to seek bankruptcy protection could prove disruptive to essential communications as well as economic activity in our country. As you well know, WorldCom has millions of subscribers in the residential and business telecommunications marketplace and also operates valuable assets associated with Internet connectivity and web-based telecommunications services.

Whether WorldCom will actually go into bankruptcy is unknowable at this point in time. I believe it is wise, however, for the Commission to prepare adequately for such an event in order to minimize any harm to the public and to ensure that telecommunications services continue if bankruptcy does occur. The law provides the Commission with ample authority to protect the public in the event of a bankruptcy. For example, Section 214(a) of the Communications Act stipulates, in part, that ***"No carrier shall discontinue, reduce, or impair service to a community, or part of a community, unless and until there shall first have been obtained from the Commission a certificate that neither the present nor future public convenience and necessity will be adversely affected thereby...."*** [47 U.S.C. 214(a)].

While the Commission chose not to intervene directly to ensure continuity of service when Excite@Home and Northpoint Communications went bankrupt last year and cut-off Internet access for tens of thousands of Americans, I hope you agree that the hazards posed to the public if WorldCom were to go bankrupt go to the core of the Commission's responsibilities. In addition to the millions of Americans who subscribe to WorldCom for traditional telephone service, WorldCom is also responsible for carrying a vast portion of the nation's email traffic. In fact, some analysts calculate WorldCom's

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email traffic carriage to be as high as 70 percent of those emails that travel within the United States and 50 percent of all such traffic worldwide.

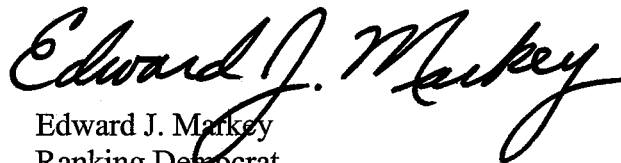
Continuity of service will be critical for the stability of the nation's telecommunications network and the quality of service to consumers. In the event of a bankruptcy, consumers must have ample opportunity to find service alternatives. Moreover, related industries will require sufficient time to ascertain how traffic may be continued or how additional subscribers and services can be accommodated by other providers.

I urge the Commission to take such steps as may be necessary to ensure the continuation of service to subscribers in the event that WorldCom goes into bankruptcy. In addition, I further recommend that the Commission work with WorldCom officials now to ensure that any layoffs that may occur as a result of, or just prior to, any bankruptcy do not lead to service quality deterioration or interruption of telecommunications service to any segment of the public.

At your earliest convenience, please provide me with your thoughts on these matters. Specifically, I am interested to know what the Commission is doing now to prepare for a possible bankruptcy and to safeguard service quality. Secondly, should a WorldCom bankruptcy occur, I am eager to know what the Commission is prepared to do to assure consumers that their service not be shut-off or that service quality will not suffer.

Thank you in advance for your time and attention to this issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Edward J. Markey". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Edward J. Markey
Ranking Democrat

House Subcommittee on
Telecommunications and the Internet